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ABSTRACT

Approximately 70,000 to 100,000 people work in public relations today in the United States. This document discusses the field of public relations at present and the view for 1980 as seen by practitioners and educators. The thesis is advanced that practitioners, educators, and students must raise the field to greater professional heights in order to improve its quality and gain acceptance in more organizations. The following topics are discussed, among others: definitions of public relations, the background of current practitioners, new roles, the issue of professionalism, the educational base, the need of businesses for public relations, accreditation and professional improvement, and the future of public relations. A bibliography is appended. (CC)

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PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE 1980'S

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Richard E. Wiegand

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Richard E. Wiegand
Journalism 535
Topic for Student
Discussion #1
Dr. A. Walker
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OUTLINE

Thesis: Public Relations in the 1980's seeks many challenges. Practitioners, educators, and students must raise the practice to greater professional heights to improve its quality and to gain acceptance in more organizations.

I. Public Relations Today

- A. It is a product of growth, the economy, and previous conceptions about the field.
- B. Several definitions are given for the field.

II. The Public Relations Practitioner Today

- A. Practitioners have various backgrounds, mostly in journalism.
- B. On-the-job duties and requirements vary.

III. The Public Relations Practitioner - A Professional?

- A. Several attributes of a profession can be applied to the field.
- B. Practitioners must ascribe to professional traits to better the field.

IV. Is Public Relations Needed Today?

- A. Executives are constantly learning the importance of effective public relations programs.
- B. Achieving results through professional competence will enhance the field to the practitioners' employers.

V. Where Public Relations Is Going

- A. The field is gaining increased acceptance.
- B. Practitioners in the 1980's must be more competent, willing to work under pressure, and willing to stand up for their professional ideas.

VI. How to Get to Where Public Relations Is Going

- A. More attention must be placed in five areas to enhance the profession.
- B. Improving the practice depends upon efforts of practitioners, educators, and PRSA.

INTRODUCTION

This paper compares what practitioners and educators in public relations say about the field today with what they say the field will be in the 1980's. Public relations is also compared with the attributes ascribed to a profession.

Each of the six main divisions of the paper could easily be expanded and become a paper in itself. Therefore, not all views on any one subject are included. The quotes presented, however, present a flavor for the general types of comments that have been made.

The content of this paper was used in a presentation/discussion made by the author to a graduate-level public relations class at Northern Illinois University on November 3, 1975. Dr. Albert Walker was the instructor.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE 1980'S

PUBLIC RELATIONS TODAY

The Setting

Public relations activities today are products of our society's growth, its economic situation, and the past and present perceptions of what is meant by the term "public relations." To better understand the setting, we must look at each of these factors.

Society growth can be equated in terms of quantitative and qualitative achievements. Quantitatively, it is suggested: that knowledge has increased a thousand fold in the last 50 years, with as much knowledge accumulated in the past 20 years as in the several thousand years preceding that; that the United States has seen a rapid population increase from 1940 (130 million), to 1970 (210 million), to 1980 (245 million, estimated); and that the country's gross national product (GNP), which more than doubled between 1940 and 1960, should be in 1980 more than twice what it was in 1960.[1]

Qualitative factors in recent years have made people more aware of the society in which they live, especially with the switch from primarily a goods-producing economy to a service economy. Public erosion of confidence in capitalism, consumerism movements, concern for ecology, and the concern for a better way of living have produced new challenges for all persons to attempt an understanding of the society in which they live.

Out of this comes a communication challenge: society members must be given the proper perspective of all sides to an issue, of all points of view in order to measure elements that comprise the world in which

they live. The mass media can provide (and sometimes does) a complete picture. But when it fails to do so, media coverage must be supplemented with public relations activities to provide the organizational views to its various publics (interest groups) that it serves.

Jilted Perspectives

Publics often fail to understand just what public relations activities are. To many persons (including some public relations practitioners) public relations is publicity, aimed at creating images as a liaison between an organization and its publics. The impressions of all-too-often ineffective public relations activities can be represented in this opinion:

> What is often troubling is that public relations can place a kind of shield between the public and reality. It creates the feeling that smiles are not quite real, laughter not quite spontaneous, wit not quite unrehearsed, praise or blame not quite from the heart, elegance not quite instinctive, courage not quite brave, and virtue not quite clean.[2]

Public relations is often thought of as "...manipulation, deception, [and] the creation of an image unrelated to reality."[3] Not only do various publics have this impression of public relations, many practitioners share it as well. Public relations, however, cannot be avoided, despite its lack of being understood.

> Public relations exists in every organization. It is omnipresent. One reason it often is maligned in the press is that all too often qualified public relations people are called in after the fact, after a cardinal rule of public relations has been violated or neglected.[4]

Definitions

Here are various definitions of what public relations today is and what the public relations practitioner does in many organizations. Bateman says public relations "...is the planned effort of a business organization or other institution to integrate itself into the society in which it exists."[5] A well known public relations text defines public relations as a "planned effort to influence and maintain favorable public opinion through acceptable performance honestly presented with two-way communication."[6] Public relations must be both a line and a staff function in any organization. Policies and procedures of an organization should be correlated with the interests of its various publics.

The public relations function should always be placed within management. The practitioner is not a part of management, but is counsel to management much the same as the corporate counsel for legal affairs. He is considered an applied behavioral scientist.

> Competent public relations people -- the record shows -- perform their best work when they have ready access to top management, and when management encourages them to establish and maintain specific programs with pre-determined goals.[7]

Public relations describes both a way of looking at an organization's performance and looking at its program of activities.[8] It has various names: public information, investor relations, public affairs, corporate communications, employee relations or communications, marketing or product publicity, consumer service, or consumer relations. It involves writing and editing, working with media, arranging special events (press conferences, exhibits, open houses, and anniversaries), determining needs and goals and

recommending appropriate action, speaking or preparing speeches, production of communication projects, sampling public opinion, and working with various employee groups.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER TODAY

Backgrounds

There are anywhere from 70,000 to 100,000 people working in public relations in the United States. As many as 60 percent work in business organizations in public relations departments, 10 percent work in non-profit organizations, and the remaining 30 percent work as independent consultants or in public relations agencies.

Backgrounds of public relations practitioners vary,

> But the odds are that you have a liberal arts education, probably in journalism or English. Math was not your strong suit. Your high ideals and strong social conscience, coupled with your ability to use words, led you to a career with the newspaper, radio or television before you entered public relations.
>
> You value your friendly relations with reporters and editors as one of your stocks in trade. You like to conceptualize, to plan in the abstract, to base proposed programs on your strong feeling that they are the <u>right</u> things to do -- even though you may not be able to quantify a bottom-line return now or at any point in the future.[9]

Many senior public relations practitioners started in journalism, representing a switch in career objectives. Many employers still look favorably upon this experience. However, more employers are recognizing the importance of college trained practitioners already trained in the field.

When first hired, the public relations practitioner often writes, edits, or produces various public relations literature. His news

media experience often helps master these skills.

New Roles

By whatever training the practitioner receives (on-the-job or through a college degree program), the practitioner can expect these to eventually be his duties:[10]

1. Evaluator of the attitudes, beliefs, trends, and goals of society, with special reference to the client or employer whom he represents.
2. Counselor to management in the sociological area -- a member of the top-level, decision-making management team who must earn the role of counselor.
3. An expert communicator who knows the psychological process of communication as well as technical knowledge of communication techniques.

To accomplish these tasks, the practitioner must be thoroughly familiar with the company, its industry, the workings of government, motivation of politicians, political trands, intellectual communities, and warnings of shifts in public attitudes.[11] As a result, some firms, such as Illinois Bell Telephone Company, have hired persons for public relations jobs with other than journalism backgrounds: a former Chicago policeman, a former street gang worker, a former university professor of education, and a former human relations counselor in a government agency.

> Together -- the trained sociologist, the street worker, the policeman and the teacher -- fill us in on the hard realities of the ghetto as it actually is, not as we think it is. They help us establish a meaningful dialogue with the community -- not just shouted conversation in

> which each side blocks out the other with preconceived notions and inadmissible assumptions.[12]

Illinois Bell also rents an apartment in a "restless public housing complex...for one of our [public relations] people who lives and works right on the scene."[13] This person thus serves both the community and his own organization and is able to counsel more effectively than sitting at a desk in the corporate headquarters.

It is estimated that there are only 25,000 professionally qualified public relations practitioners in the United States.[14] To consider this statement, we must look at whether public relations can realistically be called a profession.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER - A PROFESSIONAL?

Hallmarks of a Profession

When speaking of a profession, three sets of attributes must be considered:[15]

1. Attributes pertaining to services that are provided, such as:
   a. The services are useful.
   b. The services are provided within a set of ethical bounds and rules that are defined by the group.
   c. Only a particular set of specifically defined services are provided.
2. Attributes pertaining to the individual providing the services, such as (the individual):
   a. Is well paid.
   b. Is highly skilled in a rare capacity.
   c. Has credentials of some sort.

d. Has a special title (such as professor).

e. Is regulated and/or licensed by governmental bodies.

f. Has high status.

3. Attributes pertaining to the group as a whole:

a. Provides a specialized, standardized definition of the occupation.

b. Establishes a formal body, invariably called an association or society.

c. Sponsors journals and other literature.

d. Foments and monitors training and educational programs.

e. Develops mechanisms for sharing experiences, finding employment, setting fees, and setting salaries.

Public Relations as a Profession

To consider whether or not public relations is a profession, each of the preceding areas must be addressed. Pertaining to services, public relations practitioners do provide a useful service in transfering information to their various publics served. They attempt to maintain channels of public communication.

Although not every public relations practitioner is a member, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) has established a "Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations" and the means to enforce the code. Since the services of public relations activities are often intangible and thus makes judgment by laymen difficult, the practitioners' performance must be monitored by the ethics of the group. Competence, responsibility, and a desire to serve the public has to be maintained through the code of ethics

if public relations is to be called a profession.[16]

For those who are non-members of PRSA as well as those who are members, Bateman suggests designing a personal code of ethics as he has done for himself:

1. I believe that public relations is a profession which concerns itself not with the manipulation of people, but with their continuing education.

2. I believe that public relations practice should strive to elevate its audiences rather than degrade them, and that communication should be addressed to reason and judgment rather than emotion and prejudice.

3. I believe that sound public relations comprises deeds as well as words, that it must deal in truth rather than deception, and that it must seek to clarify issues of our times rather than confuse them.

4. While I may undertake to present one side of an issue for public consideration, I believe in the alienable right of those with opposing points of view to present their cases also, for I recognize that my right to speak can be assured only if the guarantee exists for all, including those whose causes are unpopular.

5. I believe that the democratic process should prevail in the marketplace of ideas, as well as in political and economic affairs.

6. I believe that the public interest takes precedence over the selfish interests of those I represent, and I conceive of my function as being to conform the interests of those I represent to the interests of the public whenever the two do not coincide.

7. I recognize that the consequences of my actions are effected in the minds of men and because the human mind has unmeasurable potentials for good and for evil, I must approach their minds with reverance and awe, and with over-riding respect for the inviolable right of the individual to make his own judgements.[17]

Services, Salaries, PRSA

The services offered are well defined. These specifically

designed services become more pronounced as an educational base for the field is firmly established.

Modern public relations salaries range from $7,500 and lower to $50,000 and higher, depending upon many factors.[18] These salaries appear competitive with many other "professions" such as engineering, although not as high as physicians or lawyers. To say that public relations is a rare capacity is true because the skills required do require training, and the better the training, the better the job will be performed. A trend today is to hire trained public relations practitioners rather than those who "work well with people."

The holding of credentials appears now to rest upon past experience with the media. Membership in societies such as PRSA and voluntary accreditation in such societies appears to help. Practitioners today have no special title. There is no direct governmental regulation of the practice, yet there seems to be a rather high status attributed to the practitioner from the general public.

As a group, PRSA has represented practitioners by defining the occupation and providing a group of common interests that sponsors journals and other literature, meetings, conventions, and other professional educational programs. PRSA works closely with journalism, business, and other schools that train students in public relations.

Educational Base

Many persons still believe public relations is not a profession as they mimic these words appearing in Fortune as far back as 1949:

> Public relations is still not a profession because too many of its practitioners do not possess either knowledge or capacity or ethics of a professional.[19]

It appears that the educational base affords the primary appreciation of public relations as a profession, especially when public relations teachers stress that "...professionalism begins the moment you enroll in college, not the day you are graduated."[20]

A marked increase in the value of public relations education is shown through the expansion of schools offering public relations courses. In 1955, only 28 United States schools offered a major in public relations -- now over 300 colleges and universities offer at least one course in public relations, with many instructors who have been practitioners in addition to their scholastic achievements.[21]

In addition, the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) was established in 1968 by PRSA "to cultivate a favorable and mutually useful relationship between students and professional public relations practitioners." PRSSA chapters are located on 60 campuses with 1000 members.[22] A relationship is thus established between practitioners and students to expose one to another. The greatest benefit is internship programs to further expose students to the field.

Practitioners can avail themselves of continuing education seminars, return to the campus for another degree or to switch places with professors, and support research in the field to broaden the educational base. PRSA and colleges afford these opportunities to practitioners.

The purpose of proporting public relations as a profession is to dispel ideas that

> The public relations director has mastered publicity and maybe editing skills, but [has] failed to go beyond these in education and experience...he is at the level of usefulness at which his training and experience have placed him.[23]

Concentration for Professional Title

The striving for public relations to be called a true profession must, according to Bateman, concentrate on these three essentials:[24]

1. Develop a common body of knowledge as a basis for the practice, drawn upon social sciences, business administration, and communication, to the point that the practitioner can be considered an applied behaviorial scientist.
2. Set standards of admission to the practice such that quality is foremost, beyond any whims of misinterpretation.
3. Maintain an ethical basis for admission and police conduct of practitioners through the PRSA "Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations."

Devoid of professional societies, the practitioner should at least "sell" clients or executives on the profession through able performance. The field becomes a profession if practitioners know who they are, what they stand for, and can relay this to management. A professional is not a "yes" man, but stakes his performance (and his job) upon performing his functior to the best of his ability.[25] Excellent and ethical performance is the best public relations for the field of public relations.

> You must sell yourself as a professional who is capable of mounting and maintaining a professional public relations program that will benefit your company and improve its profits. And to accomplish this, you must break through the communications barrier that is created by the different psychological makeups of you and your boss.[26]

IS PUBLIC RELATIONS NEEDED TODAY?

Businesses' Recognition of Need

Communication in any organization is vital to maintain its existence. In many instances, organizations have failed to communicate their stories effectively. Perhaps it is management's hesitation to accept what public relations is and how it affects the organization.

> The scientific revolution of the 20th Century may not yet have brought about solutions to [worldwide illiteracy, hunger and malnutrition, the population explosion, international affairs bearing on the quest of world peace, consumerism, and the environment] , but it certainly has provided us with the technical base from which solutions can be developed. In many cases, the solution lies dormant because millions of people neither understand nor can accept the solutions that lie right before them. We have, for instance, the means to control the growth of our population. Despite this, we are dismally failing to control this problem -- principally because of the lack of effective communication.[27]

The business setting creates a world of work for the public relations practitioner in defining public attitudes to management and in providing information to publics through effective communication. Once a stumbling block to effective public relations campaigns,

> Businessmen are increasingly involving both themselves and the companies they direct in the <u>total</u> world in which they operate, not merely its business facets. They are beginning to understand the RIGHTS of the public to a social involvement by the corporation it supports. And these are rights, I hardly need remind you, that the courts and regulatory bodies are increasingly recognizing.[28]

Businessmen in top management are often unaware of the great potential public relations has for their organization. To better understand why management has often misunderstood the public

relations practitioner (and why the practitioner has misunderstood his bosses), it is important that the practitioner understand who his boss is. Hodges says almost all top level managers share these characteristics:

> Their educational and work experience will have been in finance, accounting, engineering, law, marketing or possibly sales. They are analytical by nature and background; and they are accustomed to thinking in concrete terms. By and large, these managers feel that the news media are too liberal or often inaccurate and usually biased against business or industry -- plus they sometimes harbor a slight suspicion toward anybody who professes that he hangs around with reporters.
>
> As a breed, representatives of top management are strong-willed individuals with definite (although not always correct) opinions on just about every subject, including public relations. Additionally, without strong opinions, they would not have gotten where thay are today.
>
> Above all, management is vitally interested in the bottom line -- in profits, both short- and long-term -- because this is the charge placed on them by shareholders, directors and the analyst investor community.[29]

Need Must Be Stressed

As journalism schools sometimes fail to provide adequate training for the public relations practitioner in dealing with management, business schools often fail to teach future managers the value of effective public relations programs.

> The holder of an M.B.A. from a good graduate school of business has, by his original personality and the disciplined training he has received, been indoctrinated with the importance of facts, the tangibles, the measurable. He is told that it is 'fuzzy minded' to be affected by considerations that can't be included in the equation, that can't be computerized or reflected in the bottom line.[30]

> Management trusts its public relations people to carry on established communications functions, but is not willing to delegate equal responsibility in newer, hotter areas of concern which may affect the health and existence of an institution immediately and greatly.[31]

Today, public relations departments must bridge this gap by looking into areas previously considered of relatively little importance to public relations. One company that is doing this is Illinois Bell. Some of the things they are looking into are:

1. How well is our basic policy of hiring without bias being administered?
2. Have we examined our testing routines to guard against cultural or ethnic bias?
3. Have we taken a good look at our so-called "entry" jobs to determine their propriety?
4. How do our hiring plans fit with national policy such as that of the National Alliance of Businessmen?
5. What educational deficiencies persist among new hired? What, with propriety, can we do about them?
6. How do we prepare existing craft forces for the addition of minority groups to their working units?
7. What kind of sensitivity training do we need for first line management? Middle levels? The upper echelon?[32]

As public sensitivity to social and economic problems increase through the coming years, organizational management, hopefully, will demonstrate the need for knowledgeable guidance in how to adapt policies, procedures, and actions to the new climate of public relations. An early signal of potential problems, lacking in many public relations programs today due to management's lack of understanding, must become a byline of the 1980's.

WHERE PUBLIC RELATIONS IS GOING

Public Relations' Future

Predicting the future of public relations, especially in the 1980's, requires a look at what practitioners and educators in the field perceive as directions. William Gaskill views the future practice of public relations in the following:

A. Public relations problems are not going to diminish. They are going to grow in numbers and complexity.

B. The ability to come up with clear-cut, workable solutions will continue to be limited by the diversity and contradictory nature of a great many of the demands.

C. The need to understand institutions, their aims and purposes in both philosophical and operational terms will increase.

D. The advisory role of public relations will grow in importance.

E. Those advised have and will continue to become increasingly sophisticated.

F. The need for help from other disciplines in order to arrive at accurate assessment and workable solutions within the public relations area will grow explosively.

G. The need for team approaches will grow, as will the need for ability of public relations people to work as a part of a team.

H. The competition for attention will intensify.

I. The need for leaders in the public relations field -- generalists, if the phrase may be forgiven -- will tax the abilities of the practice to meet the demand.

J. The trend toward specialization and fragmentation within the public relations field, particularly as it pertains to functional and operational areas in public relations, will intensify.[33]

Others view the future practitioner needing "ever increasing insight to recognize and understand what people are asking of our society,"[34] while standing up for professional convictions by willing to give up the old for the new.

Professor Scott Cutlip views these consequences as having direct bearing on public relations in the future:

1. Increased interdependence in considering the rights and welfare of others.
2. Steady growth and power of public opinion and ability of all factions to make their voices heard.
3. Escalation in competition for attention.
4. A loss of a sense of community, resulting in alienation, antagonism, etc.
5. Multiplying maladjustments of our technology swiftly outpaces our ability to respond and adjust to them.
6. Failure of communications to keep pace with our growth and organizations of size (internal communications).
7. Emergence of the trained specialist which compounds our communication problems.[35]

The most dramatic growth in the field will come from within the ranks of management who will learn that their companies "cannot function effectively in a vacuum of public opinion."[36]

From an agency point-of-view, Finn suggests these guidelines for practitioners of the future:

1. The resolutions of conflicts may require the modification of many opinions, including those held by the PR consultant and his client.
2. Patterns of communication in the future may revolve increasingly around smaller groups.

3. The random benefits of public relations activities not directly related to corporate interests will increase.

4. New methods of research are being developed which are especially relevant to times in which opinions are likely to change rapidly.[37]

This challenging new role of the public relations practitioner means somewhat of a shift in the practitioner's emphasis.

> Will we cease to be communicators? Of course not, but we have no exclusive rights to that art. Let's leave the "mechanics" of press releases, publication editing, graphic design, community relations projects, exhibits, and demonstrations to the technicians of the future, whatever they may be called. Let's move the public relations professional toward the meaningful and dynamic role of evaluating and interpreting public opinion, public issues, public demands to our management -- whether it be predicting product response or determining ecological policy. In doing this, it is assumed we would use all the electronic equipment, all the modern communication tools available. We would be assuming responsibility for producing the formulae for successful adaptation to change by industry, government, educational institutions, whatever, in this fast moving world of ours.[38]

HOW TO GET TO WHERE PUBLIC RELATIONS IS GOING

Expanded Attention to the Field

To meet the new, more challenging demands of the public relations field, attention must be placed in five areas: education of practitioners, work standards, ethical values, expanding horizons, and personal growth.

Education is the basis for any wothwhile endeavor. While new programs are emerging each day in many new fields, public relations education is past the emerging stages. Statements such as "any college program in public relations is better than none" are no longer valid.

There are public relations courses offered now -- they must remain challenging, be job specific, and refined to be the best programs for training neophite public relations practitioners.

While many believe emphasis is needed in business administration, finance, government, or other technical specialities, others feel the mechanics of writing and editing learned in news-editorial programs are sufficient.

> There is a need for broader knowledge -- of economics, management, basic accounting, political science, current history, and liberal arts subjects -- than many public relations people are able to bring to their assignments.[39]

Most practitioners feel a college degree will be more and more an entry-level job requirement, with many companies requiring a master's degree and experience. Specialization in an area such as finance or electronics may help the future practitioner, but these specialties can be learned on the job. Wylie suggests these thoughts for the future:

1. Education for the future:
   - -More qualified practitioners: M.A. basic, Ph.D. for many.
   - -More pressure.
   - -Combine studies with on-the-job experience in media and PR before graduation.
   - -Study a variety of disciplines: business management, social sciences, political sciences, and communication subjects.
   - -Analyze and understand complex financial terms.
   - -Possess a variety of interest, educational backgrounds, and practical skills.
2. While on the job:
   - -Possess skills to anticipate potential problems.
   - -Be able to recommend priorities of concern and action.
   - -Know your subject better than anyone else.

3. Communication skills needed:
   -Speaking.
   -Writing.
   -Editing publications.
   -Graphics.
   -Art.
   -Photography.
   -Cinematography.
   -Research (use of computers).[40]
   -Speedreading.

Work standards will have to improve through more recognition programs. The Silver Anvil Awards presented annually by PRSA represent one type of recognition. Organizations should recognize the accomplishments of their public relations practitioners. All practitioners can learn from mistakes as well as accomplishments. By better recognition of both, these campaigns can become cases for public relations students to study as well as to strengthen the academic base of the field.

Improving ethical values encompasses improving professional conduct of practitioners with their publics, clients, employers, and fellow practitioners. This is not necessarily accomplished through licensing by a governmental agency.

> Society...demands that professionals do more than serve their clients loyally and cooperate with their brothers-in-arms. Modern society expects a professional to avoid practices which injure the public welfare and, even more, to make a positive contribution to the common good -- and society must constantly be shown that this is being done.[41]

Accreditation and Professional Improvement

Improving professionally can partially be done through the PRSA accreditation program, adherence to PRSA's code of ethics, and self-policing by PRSA. The advantages of such an accreditation program are to: increase the stature of public relations, provide incentives

for improvement, measure abilities, and demonstrate competence. (It may also help the practitioner get a better job or keep the one he has.) However, it must be maintained through a self-examination and constant upgrading by each practitioner personally, since not all practitioners are members of PRSA, nor should they be expected to join to remain in practice.

A practitioner should expand his horizons in the 1980's: by attending meetings, seminars, and workshops; by reading books, journals, and papers; and by getting involved in PRSA-sponsored and other society-sponsored activities. Personal growth is achieved by getting involved in these activities: presenting papers, writing articles, leading seminars instead of merely attending, and submitting campaigns for competition in contests.

Improving the practice as a whole is every practitioner's job.

> We claim to be professional communicators, highly trained in the magic arts of persuation. If we <u>really</u> believe in ourselves, if we <u>really</u> believe in our activities, then it is time to step forward and start playing an active role in the solution of our problems. It is urgent that we do so not only to achieve solutions and to persuade mankind to accept them, but also to take over the spotlight from those charlatans, self-seeking politicians, and others who make use of our profession to perpetuate themselves or to advance [their causes].[42]

It appears, then, that practitioners need to work at improving the field in the 1980's. Practitioners will have to work with PRSA and other societies to share information to improve the field. Practitioners should stir debate among themselves to improve the field and themselves.

John Chrisford has probably best summed up the future of public relations and what practitioners must look forward to in the 1980's:

> Only when practitioners bring rigor and position of the social sciences into use in providing opinion feedback and in evaluation results, will the practitioner be fully accepted by knowledgeable executives, until he does equip himself to more actively monitor the public opinion environment and provide more hard evidence of the worth of his life.[43]

CONCLUSION

Public relations as a field has come a long way in the past few years, but it has a long way to go to approach being called a true profession. The 1980's provides challenges for the field to strengthen and grow in importance and effectiveness, or stagnate and wither to the stamp of charlatans and incompetent practitioners.

The goal is to provide maximum public relations effectiveness at the lowest cost to contribute to bottom line profits. This confronts the practitioner of the 1980's as he trys to help his organization help society. If he can keep on top of the field he should be successful.

FOOTNOTES

[1]J. Carroll Bateman, "PR -- A Personal Definition and a Credo," Advertising and Public Relations Newsletter, p. 4.

[2]"The Arts and Uses of Public Relations," Time Essay Reprint, 7 July 1967, p. 2.

[3]Bateman, "PR -- A Personal Definition," p. 4.

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[5]Bateman, "PR -- A Personal Definition," p. 4.

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